Candidate Statements 2024-25

The mission of the Graduate and Professional Student Association (GPSA) is to serve the collective interests of graduate and professional students at UCSF in order to improve student life on a university and system wide level through dialogue, action, and activities between students, faculty, and staff.

Below you will find the candidate statements of the individuals running for the Executive Council. The ballot for the 2024-25 GPSA Executive Council will be open April 15-28, 2024. Good Luck!

President Honglip Park	**VP of Internal Affairs** Jasmine Garcia	**VP of Finance** Woodger Faugas
VP of Diversity Affairs Zachary Byrge Sara Ehsan	**VP of External Affairs- grad rep** OPEN	**VP of External Affairs - prof rep** Brandon Chu Keya Patel and Sarah Shapiro

Honglip Park
School of Dentistry
Third Year

I am Honglip Park, a third-year dental student. As the current Vice President of Internal Affairs for the Graduate & Professional Student Association (GPSA), I have experienced firsthand the remarkable influence the GPSA has on student life; I'm eager to run for the position of President.

In my role as Vice President, I had the opportunity to address a variety of issues that affect the UCSF community. These included reviewing student concerns about changes to the Nursing program curriculum, expanding the benefits of the transit pass, inquiring into the reasons behind alterations to primary care services for students within UC SHIP, and other significant issues.

Reaching conclusions on these issues that satisfied everyone proved quite challenging, but that fact fostered a sense of caution and humility among the board members; with that, I think we have done a good job of making positive steps towards an improved community.

Despite the annual rotation of this position, new ideas and practical changes are meticulously documented and handed on. This is important to me as I consider the continuity of the GPSA to be very important—it's vital not only to initiate new projects but also to ensure that ongoing endeavors result in growing institutional knowledge. I recall the remarkable contributions made by representatives from each school during our monthly meetings, where student concerns and perspectives were captured in minutes—by my own hand. It's crucial to honor and build upon their dedication and learn from their experiences.

It's also important to address the enhancement and optimization of our daily operations. A key focus of mine has been to ensure our meetings are conducted in a manner that is both smooth and transparent, cultivating an environment of inclusivity and engagement. It's vital that every voice is heard and respected, and that we provide unwavering attention to safety concerns.

This belief in the value of effective communication and support systems is reflected in my previous professional and volunteer work. My military service in Korea was centered around improving communication and coordination among diverse departments. And during my five years volunteering with a medical mission team in Cambodia, in partnership with non-profit organizations, I took a lead role in managing transportation logistics. These experiences have equipped me with the necessary skills to contribute effectively to this position.

I believe that when it is well run the GPSA can provide crucial support for all students. Thank you for considering me; I am eager to serve and eager to contribute to our collective success.

Woodger Faugas
School of Medicine
Third Year

I'm reaching out for your support in my bid for re-election as GPSA's VP of Finance. My journey thus far has allowed me to contribute in small, though meaningful, ways to multiple aspects of campus life, particularly in the realms of learner-centered, financial oversight and student services.

GPSA and sustained UCSF efforts in areas like mental health support, transportation, and cultural programming have reflected our shared commitment to a thriving campus life.

In this vein, the 1) Eleventh Annual UCSF Formal --which took place last October and was amply attended! --2) professional headshots offered for free for all students, and 3) the significant and unprecedented increase in funding made available by GPSA to registered campus organizations are just a few highlights of what we've achieved together.

With the upcoming transition to UCSF Health as our primary care provider, I'm excited about the positive impact this will have on our learners' health and wellness. This welcomed and expertly-led transition, already underway, promises to enrich our support systems significantly.

My tenure at GPSA has taught me the value of collaboration and effective advocacy, and I fervently believe these skills are crucial as we ensure that this important healthcare-related change will fully meet our diverse and evolving needs.

Your vote for me is a vote for continued progress and ensuring we have a committed VP of Finance --with multiple years of learner-centered, financial oversight experience --who will work to ensure that all of our voices are heard and valued, especially at a pivotal, transitional moment like the present.

As you cast your vote, thank you for considering my re-election, and let's keep building toward a brighter, more inclusive future!

Zachary Byrge
School of Dentistry
Second Year

As a candidate for Vice President of Diversity at UCSF, I am motivated by a deeply ingrained commitment to justice, equity, and inclusion. With two undergraduate degrees from UCLA – one in African American Studies with a focus on medical anthropology and political economy, and the other in Political Science with a focus on international relations – alongside a Master's degree in African American Studies with a concentration in sociology and public health, I bring a
wealth of academic expertise and real-world experience to this role.

Throughout my academic journey, I have dedicated myself to understanding the complex intersections of race, class, gender, and health, and how these factors shape individuals' experiences within our society. My studies have equipped me with the knowledge and analytical tools necessary to identify and address systemic inequities that impact marginalized communities, particularly within the realm of healthcare and academia.

Moreover, my experiences as a member of one of the most oppressed classes in society have fueled my passion for advocacy and social change. I have witnessed firsthand the barriers that marginalized individuals face in accessing opportunities and resources, and I am deeply committed to dismantling these barriers through proactive measures and inclusive policies.

My candidacy is not just about academic qualifications; it is about a genuine desire to create a more equitable and inclusive campus environment. I firmly believe that diversity is not merely a checkbox to be ticked off – it is the cornerstone of innovation, progress, and social cohesion. As Vice President of Diversity, I will work tirelessly to ensure that UCSF fosters a culture where diversity is celebrated, equity is prioritized, and inclusion is the norm.

Furthermore, my passion for community service and my unwavering dedication to justice and equality make me well-suited for this role. I have spent the majority of my adult life advocating for diversity and inclusion across various campuses in America, and I have transformative power of grassroots activism and collective action.

I am also guided by my faith and values, which inspire me to be a voice for those who are often marginalized or silenced. I believe that it is our moral imperative to stand up for the rights and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, or socioeconomic status.

In conclusion, my academic background, coupled with my passion for advocacy and my commitment to justice and equity, uniquely qualify me to serve as Vice President of Diversity at UCSF. I am ready to leverage my skills and experiences to enact meaningful change and to create a campus environment where everyone feels valued, respected, and supported. Thank you for considering my candidacy.

[Video of Zachary Byrge: 2014 Beating the Odds in California]

Jasmine Garcia
Graduate Division
Second Year

I am thrilled to submit my candidacy for the position of Vice President of Internal Affairs. Last year, I had the honor of serving as VP of Diversity Affairs and introduced a new event, Cultural Night, hosted by GPSA for all students. This event provided an opportunity for us to celebrate the wonderful communities and cultures that are part of UCSF. I am deeply familiar with the responsibilities of executive leadership within GPSA. In my previous role, I gained valuable experience in event planning, budgeting, amplifying underrepresented voices, and staying up-to-date with administrative issues discussed at UCSF. Most importantly, I advocated for and actively discussed important matters that affect all students, such as public transit and funding for various professional and graduate groups.

I am committed to fostering transparency, facilitating communication, and enhancing collaboration. I am eager to undertake the responsibilities outlined for this role. If elected, I will ensure that our members are informed and engaged in our proceedings. As a liaison with campus publications, particularly Synapse, I will strive to facilitate effective communication channels between GPSA and the broader student body. Through regular reports and updates, I aim to keep our community informed about pertinent issues and initiatives undertaken by our association. I will also continue to support our Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs) by facilitating coordination and communication among them. Furthermore, I am prepared to serve as Election Chairperson, ensuring fair and transparent electoral processes.

Lastly, I will continue to collaborate with RCOs, GPSA members, and academic councils, listen to others' concerns, offer resources, and facilitate connections. I pride myself on my ability to maintain a positive attitude to accomplish whatever I set my mind to and hope to bring forth more exciting interprofessional events next year.

Thank you for your consideration!

Sara Ehsan
School of Dentistry
Second Year

I am honored to announce my candidacy for the position of Vice President of Diversity Affairs within our esteemed association. With a deep-seated commitment to promoting diversity and inclusion, coupled with my experience as the current class Representative Of IDP class of 2026 and participation in the Student Diversity Leadership Program at the 2024 ADEA conference in New Orleans, I am enthusiastic about the opportunity to serve our graduate and professional student community in this capacity.

Throughout my tenure as class Representative , I have been dedicated to advocating for the needs and interests of our student body. I firmly believe that
diversity is not just a concept to be acknowledged, but a fundamental pillar that enriches our educational experience and strengthens our community. My participation in the Student Diversity Leadership Program has equipped me with invaluable insights and skills to effectively champion diversity within our
association and beyond.

If elected as Vice President of Diversity Affairs, I am committed to pursuing the following objectives:

- Coordinating programs and initiatives that promote the growth and representation of diverse student populations, ensuring that all voices are heard and valued.
- Holding quarterly meetings with diversity-related Registered Campus Organizations (RCOs) to foster collaboration and coordination of events on campus.
- Facilitating the dissemination of information about diversity-related RCO events and resources, ensuring accessibility for all students.
- Nominating student representatives to campus committees related to diversity for GPSA Assembly Approval, advocating for inclusive decision-making processes.
- Maintaining regular communication with key offices such as the Office of Diversity and Outreach, the Multicultural Resource Center, and others, to stay informed about diversity initiatives and resources and reporting back to the GPSA Assembly.
- Addressing student grievances related to campus diversity issues with diligence and empathy, and making recommendations to the GPSA Assembly for their adjudication.
- Ensuring a smooth transition for the next Vice President of Diversity Affairs by providing comprehensive guidance and support during the transition period.

I firmly believe that by working together, we can create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all graduate and professional students. I humbly ask for your support in the upcoming election.

Together, let us continue to uphold the values of diversity and inclusion that are integral to our association and our broader community.

Thank you for your consideration.

Keya Patel and Sarah Shapiro
School of Pharmacy
Second Year

Our names are Keya Patel and Sarah Shapiro and we are running together for the office of the Vice President of External Affairs - Professional Representative. We were honored to be your VPs of External Affairs for the past two years and represent UCSF on UCGPC. This year, we had the opportunity to highlight the various issues that UCSF students face as well as work with the other UC schools to advocate for these issues on a larger scale both at the state and national capitol. Recently, we met with U.S. Senators and Representatives from California to discuss student needs regarding affordable housing, mentorship standards, undocumented student employment, and mental health. We strive to better understand the needs and challenges of our student body so we can help address your concerns.

With our previous experiences on GPSA, we plan to continue the work we've done this year and become even more involved next year in advocating for the rights of all students. Next year, we would like to increase communication with the various school reps as well as the rest of the GPSA board in order to understand the specific needs of every school and bring these issues to the forefront of our meetings with our UCGPC colleagues.

Thank you for taking the time to consider us for the role of VP of External Affairs and we hope to see you all vote in the upcoming election!

Brandon Chu
Third Year
School of Medicine

As a dedicated advocate for student voices and a firm believer in the power of collective action, I'm excited to announce my candidacy for the position of VP of External Affairs. This role represents an incredible opportunity to amplify the concerns and aspirations of our diverse student body, and I'm committed to leveraging my skills and experiences to effectively be your advocate.

During my tenure as a class representative for the School of Medicine Class of 2025, I have consistently demonstrated my ability to listen, collaborate, and drive meaningful change. I serve as a strong student voice on multiple governance committees within the School of Medicine (e.g., Student Medical Education Council, Foundations 2 Operations Committee, Supergroup), championing initiatives that address student concerns and enhance student outcomes. With the support of my peers, I successfully collaborated with faculty and staff to increase student autonomy in exam scheduling, develop a pilot initiative for tracking student work hours, and establish new guidelines for Zoom participation in group settings.

My advocacy also extends beyond UCSF. For the past two years, I have proudly served as a student delegate to the American Medical Association, Medical Student Section, where I provided testimony for resolutions that directly impact medical students, physicians, and patient care on a national level. At the same time, it is my past role as a legislative intern at Berkeley City Council that grounds me. Just as I dedicated myself to hearing from individual constituents and addressing their concerns, I'm committed to carrying this ethos forward, prioritizing open communication and accessibility to all students as VP of External Affairs.

If elected, it will be my duty to represent our student body in external organizations including the University of California Student Association and the Council of Student Fees, among others. I'm committed to not only fulfilling this duty but also actively engaging with these organizations to advocate for policies and initiatives that benefit UCSF graduate and professional students, ensuring that our concerns are heard and addressed.

I'm grateful for your consideration, and I'm confident that my experiences, passion, and dedication make me a strong candidate for this role. Most of all, I'm excited about the opportunity to continue serving our vibrant student community.

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